

SOCIALISM AND FEDERATION



By
BARBARA WOOTTON

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SOCIALISM AND FEDERATION

By BARBARA WOOTTON

1

The term socialism is constantly bandied about in debate with reckless disregard for consistency of meaning. There are now sects within sects, and a bewildering variety of orthodoxies and heresies. In consequence it would be easy enough in all sincerity to write a tract on socialism and federation, of which many professing socialists would say that it was all very well, but that it had nothing to do with socialism. Indeed, it is already nearly impossible to write anything on this subject without provoking *some* socialists to say this.

In the hope, however, of minimising that supremely barren form of controversy in which the disputants use the same word in contradictory senses, I shall begin by writing down a few broad principles which seem to me to be the most clearly distinguishing characteristics of socialism, as the term is generally used by socialists themselves. For the purposes of this tract, then, a socialist is a person:

(1) who wishes to see available resources used in the way that will provide the best possible life and living for everybody ;

(2) who sets a particularly high value upon economic and social equality for its own sake (i.e. a socialist is not content with establishing a minimum standard for everybody, if a minority enjoy positions and privileges of gross superiority) ;

(3) who believes that these first two ends cannot be attained without extensive, collective and conscious planning of economic life, and particularly by far-reaching substitution of collective for private ownership of industrial resources; and

(4) who sees in the existing inequality of distributing of economic, social and political power (which he calls a class system), a major obstacle to the successful use of the instrument described in (3) for the purpose of achieving the ends described in (1) and (2).

To these propositions it must be added that a socialist always claims to be an internationalist; and that, if there are socialists who set no store by civil and political liberty, or who would cheerfully sacrifice these in what they conceive to be the interests of their socialist objectives, then this pamphlet is not written for them; because a socialist who is not also politically a democrat cannot be interested in plans for democratic federation. The appeal in these pages is to the great body of socialists who both respect and accept the title of democrat.

Inevitably, these rough definitions still leave a good many loose ends lying about; but I hope that they will do something to tidy up what might otherwise be a very untidy discussion. It is obvious, of course, that assent to one or two of the above propositions in isolation does not make a socialist. They must be read as a whole. For instance, it is not only socialists who would endorse the first of the propositions. The anti-socialist would also say (to-day; but not a century ago) that he too wants everybody to have a decent life and decent living; but he would add that the best chance of achieving this is to give free play to ordinary commercial enterprise, and to prevent the socialistically wrongheaded from putting spokes

in the wheel of an economic system which would do the job admirably, if it was only given a chance. It is also plain enough that planning and collectivisation can be (and are) used for purposes which would be altogether horrifying to any one to whom socialism means respect for social equality, for liberty and for the welfare of the common man. Planning and collectivisation are neutral instruments. The socialist is convinced that they are necessary tools for his purpose; but he is aware that, as with other powerful weapons (such as the aeroplane), potential usefulness is apt to be matched by potential noxiousness.

Turning now to Federation, we need be much less worried over problems of definition. For Federation, being less ambitious in its pretensions, is correspondingly more precise in its meaning than is a general concept like socialism. Federation means the establishment over more than one previously independent state of a supra-national government with strictly limited functions. Those functions may be ranged in a sort of priority as follows: First is the rock-bottom minimum, without which a federation is not a federation, namely federal control of armed forces and of foreign policy. Next come powers which a large body of federalist opinion wishes to see federalised, but the lack of which would not actually destroy the distinctively federal character of a supra-national state. These are control of tariffs and other trade restrictions, control of migration, and of currency, and administration of any dependent territories. In this paper it is assumed that these powers will, in fact, be in the hands of any federal authority with which we are concerned. Finally, comes a third group of powers, such as the right to initiate public works and operate public utilities, and to enforce standards in working conditions and social services. The range of these, as we

shall see, will largely depend upon the attitude of the socialists themselves.

Within these limits the exact constitution of our Federation must be left unprecise till we know who is likely to federate with whom in what circumstances. So must its geographical area. Things change appallingly fast nowadays; but at the time when these words are written, interest is concentrated upon Federation as a possible solution of European, and particularly of Western European, problems at the end of this war; and as an objective upon which movements that are revolutionary in Germany and constitutional in this country, might focus their efforts to shorten the war, by removing the conflicts from which it sprang. It is, therefore, particularly a European, or at least a Western European, Federation that I have here in mind; though much of what is said may well have a more general reference, and be relevant to any and every Federation that is democratic, in the sense that the governments of the Federation itself, and of every member state, can be changed without recourse to force. This last qualification must be understood to be implied throughout. There is no occasion to dirty valuable paper by discussion of federated dictatorship.

II

Now the socialist's interest in such a European Federation is the interest, which he shares with every one who lives on this distressful continent, in the establishment of stable peace; but to the socialist, thanks to his urgent desire for social reconstruction and his international sympathies, this common interest appears plus a little something which others have not got. Let us see what the absence of peace and of a stable international order, particularly in Europe, has meant to the socialist movement.

Before the war of 1914 socialists had built up what looked like a powerful international movement. The socialist Second International (Second, because it followed Marx's abortive first attempt in the eighteen-sixties) boasted twelve million affiliated members in the socialist parties of twenty-two countries; *and it had no rival*. In the tension of international politics in the early years of this century the International set itself to meet the impending threat of war. In 1910 nearly 900 socialists, representing twenty three nations, met at Copenhagen to speak the mind of international socialism on this issue. The conference demanded disarmament, active working-class propaganda for peace, and an end to secret treaties; and it remitted to its executive the task of testing opinion on the possibility of using the general strike as a weapon to prevent war. The report on this last matter was to be submitted to a further conference called for August 23rd, 1914.

On August 1st Germany declared war on Russia. The same day the German socialists sent an envoy to their French comrades in an attempt to agree that both sides should vote against war credits. The French refused this assurance. On August 4th the German Social Democratic Party declared its acceptance of the "grim fact of war" and its refusal "to leave the fatherland in the lurch" in the face of "the horrors of hostile invasion."

From that day to this there has never again been an undivided international socialist movement. And, except for minute minority parties, there has never again been an international socialist movement which has not at one time or another taken sides in international disputes, and even

exhorted its members to take up arms. The greater part of the inter-war period was filled with the unedifying spectacle of internecine disputes between the reconstituted Social-Democratic Second, and the new-born Communist Third, Internationals. For many years the Second and its affiliated parties struggled to resurrect their traditional pacifism, based on belief in the need for common men and women, the world over, to recognise a community of interests that transcends national distinctions and flouts national boundaries. But after the rise of Hitler came a complete reversal. The British Labour Party, the most influential of all the members of the Second, swung over from complete opposition to the "rearmament of *any* country in *any* circumstances" ¹ to support for a collective security system based upon the armed force of its members. In the war of 1939 the majority socialist parties in the Allied countries followed this policy to its logical conclusion when they lined up behind, or joined hands with, their governments in the conduct of the war.

Meantime, the Third International, after more than a decade of fulminating against the "great betrayal" of 1914, against "imperialist war" and the "robber" League of Nations changed its tune also, with the entry of the Soviet Union into the League. In 1935, anticipating "the attack of a Great Power on a small one," it was instructing communists to "place themselves in the front ranks of the fighters for national independence and to wage the war of liberation to a finish."

The moral is plain. International socialism cannot stand up against international anarchy. The claims of national

¹ These were the actual terms of a resolution (underlined mine) passed unanimously at the Party Conference of 1932.

security, if not of rampant nationalism, are too strong. As long as there is no machinery other than war to deal with political gangsters, the socialist is faced with an intolerable dilemma. Either he must take up arms against his comrades, or he must lie down before aggression. He has generally chosen the former alternative. And socialism as an international movement is in ruins.

Nor is this all. The socialist is interested in equality and in the standard of the common man's living. It is, thanks to the socialist parties, that an impressive machinery of services has been set in motion (particularly in this country and in the Scandinavian States) which can at least claim to have done something to redress the crazily tilted balance as between rich and poor. But the greatest enemy of such social progress is always war and war preparation. In England, in September 1939, we had just reached the stage when we were prepared to keep all our children at school at least till fifteen, so that the schooling of the majority should only be three, not four, years shorter than that of the prosperous few. Instead, thanks to the war, compulsory school attendance, which had been part of our law for over sixty years, came to an end altogether, and has never since been fully restored. Again, in England, in the budget of April 1940, the cost of one year's war was reckoned at £2,000 millions (an estimate that has already proved quite insufficient). How much is £2,000 millions ? In Great Britain there are altogether some fifteen million insured wage-earners. The money assigned to war purposes would therefore suffice to raise the wages of every man and woman, boy and girl, amongst those millions by something like fifty shillings a week. I do not, of course, for one moment, suggest that such a flat redistribution would be the best use for that money, should the abolition of the

war menace make any such sum available for social purposes. The figure is quoted merely to give an idea of the colossal possibilities which are closed to us by the persistence of international anarchy.

Thus, twice in half a century socialists have seen the social progress of years shattered in a single night. Twice in half a century they have seen money desperately needed for the homes and health of the people diverted to the hideous business of war. So long as we have to carry burdens of this magnitude, so long shall we have, not socialist prosperity and equality, but poverty, malnutrition and colossal waste both of human and of material resources. It is intolerable that we should have to put up with this merely for lack of the machinery to stop it. But so long as socialists have no constructive international policy, so long will these burdens have to be carried.

In other words, the notion that you must get socialism first, after which all things international will be added unto you, is a notion which ignores the lessons of experience. By that method you do, to be sure, get certain things which have a place in the list of socialist essentials with which this paper opened. You get conscious collective planning of economic life—but planning in war for war. Planning for equality, planning for construction and for the daily welfare of the common man—these are indefinitely postponed. Everything is held up, or, worse still, put back, owing to our failure to deal adequately with the problem of international, and particularly of European, order. Hitherto the socialist movement has attempted to tackle this problem by two alternating and mutually inconsistent phases. First a phase of pacifism, of assertion of the international solidarity of the working-class and of their determination not to arm against one another; then a complete swing round to popular fronts,

to support of programmes of national or collective security and finally, in the case of the majority socialists, to whole-hearted participation in war. And all that has been won is the bitter taunt that it is, thanks to the socialists that, if fight we must, we fight always unequipped and unprepared.

The question is then: Can Federation get us out of this impasse? Federation proposes to establish an authority whose business it is to deal with warmongers *personally*; to take the instruments of warfare out of their hands, and out of the hands of the national states, on whose behalf, legitimately or illegitimately, they profess to act. Federation proposes to establish elementary order in the international field; and to do for states what the state did for individuals, when it put an end to the settlement of personal disputes by knife or bludgeon, bottle-end or pistol. When that kind of elementary order is established, then we can talk about socialism to some purpose. But not before.

Still, however, many socialists are suspicious. They are suspicious because they do not believe that Federation will eliminate the causes of war. War, on this view, is economic in origin. It is, due to the internal and external stresses of capitalist societies.¹ Says Lenin: "The question arises, then, is there, under capitalism, any means of eliminating the disparity between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the partition of colonies and 'spheres of influence' by finance capital on the other side, other than war?" Says Pritt: "States

¹ The term capitalism, which has become quite as chameleon-like as its opposite number, socialism, had best be understood to mean anything in English, or American, or any other contemporary Society (except the Soviet Union and the Fascist states), which conflicts with the socialist requirements set out on p. 3-4

fight to keep or to win markets and fields of investment, to distribute or redistribute the spoils of Imperialist exploitation of colonial territories. . . . They fight with quotas and tariffs, with prohibitions and trade agreements; and in the end they fight with shells and bullets and the bodies of working-men." Says Laski: "States do not cling to their sovereignty without cause. They do so to protect a body of vested interests within those boundaries able effectively to invoke its protection."

Now war is a very ancient institution. People have been fighting wars for a very long time—much longer than they have been talking about capitalism and socialism; though not longer than there has been poverty and injustice in the world—which is always. It is reasonable to suppose that at different times in this long history, there must have been different kinds of wars originating in different ways. And it is also possible that, in the nineteenth century, economic conflict, and the desire to exploit less highly developed peoples, were primary causes of war: that it was the conflicts of interest between "a comparatively small group of extremely rich men" which resulted in "one destructive war after another."¹ But even in that period this is not an entirely satisfactory theory. There were plenty of occasions on which, as in the disputes which led up to the Russo-Japanese war,² fake capitalist interests were deliberately invented by governments as a smoke-screen to hide their own political ambitions; and plenty of occasions on which "high finance shook at its knees when any political complications cropped up;" just as, on the other side, there were plenty of genuine examples of financial intrigue luring governments into war in

¹ Pritt: *Federal Illusion* ? pp. 82, 83.

² For these and other examples see Robbins, *Economic Causes of War*.

defence of vested interests.

But theory must keep pace with facts. In modern conditions the theory of the exclusively economic causation of war becomes more and more unreal. A state which plunges into war in the hope of winning new, or safeguarding old, markets is embarking on a hopeless enterprise; because, whatever else modern war may do, it does not get or keep you markets, not even if you are victorious. The British were victors in the last war, and have been in trouble ever since for loss of the markets which the winning of that victory cost them. And "the small group of extremely rich men" must be stupid beyond belief, if they seriously imagine that total war is going to be good either for their political power. If they have not yet learned from experience that modern war is no respecter of life or property, surely the aeroplanes will teach them soon! But the zeal with which many of these rich men supported Chamberlain's appeasement and peace-at-any-price policy suggests that, on the contrary they already see well enough that their bread is not buttered on the side of war. Economically, modern war is the unmistakable ruination (as that word is variously understood in various stations of life) of rich and poor alike.

It is true that an economic colour has been given to the present war by the immense fuss made by the German government about the hardship due to the loss of their colonies. Facts and figures, however, have established beyond dispute that the economic resources of colonial areas have been greatly exaggerated; although those who supplied these answers were not always quick to draw the obvious conclusion that what would be so little advantage to the Germans to acquire must be equally little loss to its present owners to surrender. All this sham economics,

however, fits in with a much more realistic explanation of modern war, namely that it is a completely irrational survival, which persists because it is traditional in our culture; because pride in one's country means, first and foremost, if not exclusively, pride in its fighting strength; because no steps have been taken to prevent neurotics and gangsters from wielding power in international politics; and because (alas!) war satisfies a certain desire for working together in a common cause, to which our peace-time way of living is stupidly inattentive. War is a monster, in fact, which feeds on itself. Colonies are not now, generally speaking, economically of first importance. You can point out to the Nazis a thousand times over that the value of the precious materials which they imported from their colonies, when they had any, was less than one-hundredth part of what they got from the rest of the world—and still they will not be satisfied, because colonies are prestige, and colonies are the sinews of war. Access to rubber and oil does not mean just the certainty of always being able to buy tyres for buses, and petrol for family cars. It means military security. We must have empire to protect us against the risk of war. We must have war to protect our empire. That is the vicious circle. It is now twenty-five years since Bertrand Russell proclaimed war as the offspring of fear and went to prison for his opinions. That did not prevent him from being right, any more than the same treatment prevented Galileo from being right, when he said that the earth went round the sun and not *vice versa*. Men fight less for markets than for fear, for national glory, and for fighting's sake.

So we come back to it that the only way to break this circle is to establish a supra-national authority with

the power and the duty to keep order. Whatever the root causes of war may be (and it is most important that we should probe further into these) the immediate step is to deal with the *fact* of war. The domestic analogy still holds here. It is vitally important to probe into the causes that make burglars burgle and murderers murder, and, if possible, so to change the structure of our society that people cease to do these things. But you cannot wait to establish a judicial and police system which will deal with the *fact* of burglary and murder until these far-reaching researches and changes have been carried through; if only because these researches and changes themselves depend upon immunity from murder and burglary. And the problem is the same with international, as with domestic, crime.

III

The fact that social progress is contingent upon international order is the primary reason for socialist interest in Federation; but it is by no means the only one. There are more positive grounds also. Conscious and planned direction of economic life over a wide area, is essential, in the opinion of socialists, in order to achieve the equality and prosperity for which they hunger. They have, therefore, a particular concern with the economic aspects and possibilities of Federation.

For the scale of plans is hardly less important than their content. Common sense suggests that the appropriate scale must vary enormously according to what you are dealing with. Common sense also suggests that it is extremely unlikely that the nation-state is the largest unit in this shrinking modern world of which constructive econo-

mic planning should ever take account. To take only two examples, the planning of transport and the planning of power on a purely national scale is quite out of keeping with reality. Western Europe at the very least is, or rather ought to be, a single power-cum-transport unit. Some years ago the socialist Labour Party in England produced a scheme for a publicly-owned and publicly-operated combined coal and power industry. Within its own limits it may have been a wise enough plan; but it would have been far more effective, had it been able to link up British coal and power production with that of states across the water (some of which had played their part in bringing the British mines and miners to their sorry plight). A European Federation would be thinking in terms of such things as a publicly-owned European grid and (most decidedly) European airlines. Only under the settled and ordered government of a Federation is it possible to create interstate public utilities that are operated for the common welfare. In the Soviet Union the economic unit ranges from the All-Union enterprise to the village co-operative. In the (much smaller) area of non-Soviet Europe international anarchy condemns us always to stop short at the intermediate stage.

Other economic problems now also require a larger canvas. The socialist state is a social service state. Hitherto, tentative efforts have been made to raise international social standards through the activities of the International Labour Organisation. Like the League of Nations, the I. L. O. has no authority and no sanction behind its decisions. Its history is a pitiful record of work begun, but left undone for lack of power of enforcement. During the first (and most successful) ten years of its history only about one-third of the possible total of

ratifications of twenty-six agreed conventions had been secured. Twenty-five countries had ignored every single convention, and the majority had ratified less than half of the total. In other words the I. L. O. method of "legislation" has been, at best, less than thirty per cent effective.

A government with authority behind it does not tolerate thirty per cent observance of the law! What the International Labour organisation *tried* to do for Labour standards, a Federal government *could* do, within its own territory. It is not necessary that the Federation should have exclusive power of legislation in this field. In view of the great variety of local conditions and possibilities, it is not even desirable that it should. What is wanted is a federal constitution which gives concurrent powers to both state and federal governments to legislate on labour matters, provided only that in cases of conflict the latter must prevail. In this way a system of federal minima can be combined with higher standards in states where socialist practice is more advanced; and the citizens of the latter can be relieved of their perpetual fear of the low-standard neighbour across the frontier.

Finally, Federation smooths the path for that great ally of international socialism, an international Trade Union movement. Experience has shown that it is possible to build Trade Unions that are capable of concerted action over vast geographical areas, provided that they do not extend beyond the boundaries of independent states. Only in the case of the (unfortified) Canadian border has this limitation been overcome; and that only in certain industries. But over the great territories of the United States the Railway Workers, the Mine Workers, the Garment Workers, to mention only a few, have built powerful nationwide

societies; whereas in Europe the international Trade Union movement has suffered exactly the same disasters as have the socialist internationals. It, too, cracked in 1914, under the stress of patriotic loyalty, when the German Trade Unions "accorded the most loyal support to the civil and military authorities;" and the British and French followed suit in their respective countries. And it cracked again in the stormy nineteen-thirties. Even during the intervals of comparative peace, its activities have been confined to consultation and conference (always without power to act) and to occasional mutual financial assistance in a modest way. Its conferences were conferences, not of fellow citizens, but of foreigners. Even in cases of the gravest social injustice, in Europe continental solidarity of the workers, even in a single industry, has remained always a dream. Yet from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast continental solidarity is both practicable and practised.

IV

The foregoing arguments are not affected by the immediate events of the present war. They would have equal force even if the independence of Poland, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark and France, and all who went before or may come after, had never been lost. But, paradoxically enough, the tragic plight of Europe actually adds point to socialist-federalist case. For to-day (November 1940) the European peoples from the Baltic to the Atlantic on one side, and to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea on the other, live under what is substantially one rule. The continent has indeed been unified-unified by conquest and under tyranny.

Sooner or later, we who reject that tyranny hope to be in a position to decide what is to be done about

that unity. One course is simply to break it up: to restore the pre-war European chess-board and to re-establish the independence of as many of the old jealous, frightened states as possible. (Frontiers might perhaps be drawn with a little more regard to professed principles of national self-determination, and a little less strategic cynicism. But these are details.) We can, if we wish, forget both the logic of twentieth-century technique and the wider horizons of twentieth-century citizenship, and set to work to break the Nazi Empire into at least as many pieces as went to its making—if we wish. But is it conceivable that any socialist really does wish to take this line? To do so means to re-establish at least eight separate tariffs; at least eight different currencies; and at least eight different sets of rules for excluding the workers of one state from entry into the territory jealously reserved for their comrades in another—all within an area which measures only three-fifths of that of the United States and less than one-third of that of the Soviet Union. It means also to re-open the door to all the old quarrels between the so-called haves and have-nots, as well as to the shameful system under which exploited colonial peoples are bandied about as the prize in the hideous game of European power politics. It is hard to believe that a movement which was launched with an exhortation to the workers of the world to unite, and which has consistently condemned the political tutelage and economic servitude of the black man, can put its influence behind a programme so narrow and so exclusive.

The other course is to accept the fact that, by foul means if not by fair, the old disorder is gone for ever; that it is not the disintegration, but the transformation of the far-flung Nazi empire which must be our aim; and that the common welfare of all who have suffered under

Nazi rule is the basis on which a new and wider order must be built.

That transformation cannot, however, be accomplished except within a political framework. Economic common sense, to be sure, takes no notice of political frontiers. But economic common sense cannot operate by itself. The history of the past ten years should be enough to knock the bottom out of the simple view that economics are always the master, and never the servant, of politics. For all those years the states of Europe have been engaged in a gigantic and suicidal game of competitive self--improvement. And they have played that game partly because their economic policies were subordinate to the greater and still more dreadful game of power politics, the rules of which none dared to defy; and partly because there was nobody with authority to stop them. The unity of Europe did not come about, and will not maintain itself, merely because it has economic advantages. It will be maintained so long, and only so long, as an established political government is in a position both to give expression to the need for that unity, and to support it with the force of law. For the anti-Nazi there is only one question: what sort of a government is that to be?

V

The plain truth of the matter is, then, that socialism and federation are complementary parts of the same whole. Recently the persuasive pen of Mr. Strachey¹ has sought to present them as alternatives. It is an unnatural and unnecessary choice. One might as well assert that in housedesigning the choice is between kitchen and bathroom. It is true that a house can be built which lacks one or the other

¹ In this book *Federalism or Socialism ?*

of these conveniences, just as it is true that non-socialist federation is entirely possible. To the socialist, a federal government which disregards the social values which he rates so highly, and neglects to use the instruments on which he relies, is admittedly as poor a substitute for a socialist federation as is a house without a bath-room for one with kitchen and bath. Again, it is true that, within a limited national area, conscious economic planning can achieve some approximation to the socialist ideal of equality. But to accept this restriction to the national plane is like fussing so much over a bathroom that one entirely forgets the need for a kitchen.

The position that the socialist has to face amounts, in fact, to this. Political federation is now a necessary condition for ordered political activity of any kind. Indeed, it is probably a condition of mere survival. Federate or perish, as Attlee said. But the nature and the possibilities of any Federation, if and when it comes, will depend upon the aims and objects of the men and women who are instrumental in bringing it to birth. That is why to boycott the idea of federation on the ground that that idea is not inherently and inescapably socialist is a most short-sighted policy; because in that way the danger of non-socialist or antisocialist elements dominating the drive towards larger political units is gravely magnified. For a socialist to demand, on this account, a boycott of federalist movements is like refusing to ride in a bus because buses can be used to carry people to anti-socialist meetings. Federation itself, like planning and collectivisation, is a neutral instrument. It is the job of the socialist to direct its great possibilities towards his own particular ends. To do that job effectively, the time to begin is before, not after, Federal Europe is an accomplished fact.

For the time has come when we have to recognise that the needs of the common man and woman can only be met by a programme in which there are three equally essential elements. First comes civil and political freedom—the common platform of all professing democrats, socialist or nonsocialist, from the eighteenth century onwards. We must have the right to speak our own minds and to listen to what is in the minds of others, to be free from spying and arbitrary arrest, and to say our say in the choice, and in the criticism, of those who exercise political power.

Next come our social and economic needs. We must be freed, in this age of plenty, from the tyrannous spectre of want and insecurity. We must not be the victims of economic power concentrated in the hands of an irresponsible minority. We must not suffer exclusion, on grounds of birth or poverty or other social inferiority from opportunity to make the most of our talents in the service of the community. We must not be exposed to the indignity and humiliations (or corrupted by the arrogance and narrowness) which every system of social stratification brings in its train. It is in this struggle for social and economic security that the socialist has given most conspicuous service. It is for these ends, and no others that he wants his planning and his socialisation, his redistributive taxation and his generous social services.

The third element is the creation of a supra-national authority—partly, as we have seen, as a means of putting an end to the incessant mutual destruction of peoples who claim to stand in the front ranks of civilisation; and partly as itself the indispensable instrument of socialist planning, on a scale commensurate with the technical and economic realities of the age in which we live.

No; socialism and federation are not the true alternatives. The true alternatives which face the socialist are these. He can continue to socialise and plan and equalise within his own particular territory and under his own particular flag, leaving his (still foreign) comrades in equal isolation to do the same. He can shut his eyes to the yawning gap in socialist programmes which the decay of internationalism has torn open. He can follow the road of the past twenty-five years—twenty-five years in which the socialists of this continent have twice abandoned their class struggles and their social programmes, in order to take up arms against their comrades: twenty-five years in which “ socialism in our time ” has been degraded into the bastard parody known as National Socialism.

Or he can reject what has proved itself to be only the socialism of the battlefield and of the war cabinet. He can admit in Laski's phrase “ the necessity for world control where the decision is of world concern, ” recognising that the sovereignty of the State is incompatible with a just system of international relations.”¹ He can demand the “ concepts not of imperialism but of federalism.”² In the graves of France and Flanders and the ruined homes of London he can read the implications of international anarchy in a shrinking world; and he can consign the nation-state to the limbo of out-worn political systems, as he has already consigned the private bank and the workhouse to the limbo of economic anachronisms. That way alone can he, at last, release the creative socialist internationalism that has been so long and so painfully frustrated.

1 Laski: *Liberty in the Modern State*.

2 Laski: *Grammar of Politics*.

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